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(54) System and method for user-interactive bookmarking of information content

(57) A system and method for providing improved bookmarking of remotely provided user-interactive information such as WWW page content are provided. When a bookmark of a page is created, in addition to storing a remote file access pointer such as a universal resource locator, a locator element is stored which identifies a particular subset of the page. When the book-

mark is subsequently accessed, only the updated particular subset is displayed, thereby eliminating the need for users to repeatedly scroll through material in which they are not interested. A super-bookmarking option is provided which provides for a bookmark which results in the display of a collage of previously created bookmarked material.

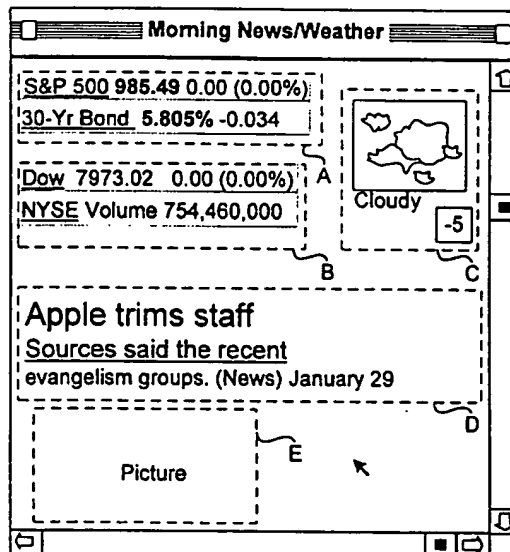


Fig. 5C

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Description

Field of the Invention

[0001] The invention relates to the bookmarking of user-interactive information accessed over a communication network.

Background of the Invention

[0002] It is common for computer users to access user-interactive information content over a communication network. The most prevalent example of this today involves the access of HTML (hyper-text mark-up language) files over the WWW (world wide web). User-interactive information content such as HTML files may be referenced over the communications network of interest with a file pointer which in the case of HTML files is referred to as a URL (universal resource locator). Typically, due to size limitations of the screen and/or window being used to view the user-interactive information content, only a portion of the content, which may include text and graphics for example, may be displayed at any instant. The amount of data content which may be viewed may depend upon physical limitations of the screen, or upon a limitation imposed due to the size of a window in which the contents are being viewed, this window size being selected by the user. The remainder of the content may be viewed by scrolling which causes different portions of the content to be displayed.

[0003] Conventional web browsing software has bookmarking functionality which allows the URL of frequently accessed WWW pages to be stored for convenient retrieval. It is frequently the case that within a page, it will be desirable to access a particular portion repeatedly. For example, some stock quote web pages feature several advertisements at the top, followed by some other useless information, and followed finally by the stock quotes appearing in a box. The box may appear in the same location within the page each time the page is accessed. Each time a user accesses the quotes, he must scroll down past the advertisements, and possibly widen or lengthen the window size to show the entire quote box.

[0004] Typically, these scroll positions and window sizes are stored only in temporary memory, and then erased from that memory when the windows are closed. This means that the user must perform the same scrolling and window-resizing each time a particular portion of a page is to be viewed. This problem is most severe in screens having physical screen-size limitations because the scrolling function may be slow.

Summary of the Invention

[0005] It is an object of the invention to obviate or mitigate one or more of the above identified disadvantages. The above object is met by the combination of features

of the main claim, the sub-claims disclosing further advantageous embodiments of the invention.

[0006] According to a first broad aspect, the invention provides a method of providing enhanced user-interactive information content bookmarking in the context of page access from a remote service provider, comprising the steps of: a) in the process of creating a bookmark: i) accessing a page having a remote access file pointer; ii) selecting a create enhanced bookmark option; iii) storing the remote access file pointer in a bookmark directory record; iv) also storing in the bookmark directory record at least one locator element; b) in the process of using a bookmark: i) selecting a previously created enhanced bookmark record; ii) downloading into memory the page identified in the remote access file pointer of the selected bookmark; iii) displaying in a display window a subset of the downloaded page, the subset being determined by said at least one locator element.

[0007] In a preferred embodiment points in said page each have an (X,Y) co-ordinate pair, and the at least one locator element comprises a particular (X,Y) co-ordinate pair of a particular point in the page and, optically, a second (X,Y) co-ordinate pair of a second point in the page.

[0008] Said step of displaying the subset of the downloaded page was comprise displaying the page with said particular point in the upper left hand corner of the display window.

[0009] In a further preferred embodiment said step of displaying the subset of the downloaded page comprises displaying a rectangular portion of the page defined by said first and second co-ordinate pairs as its upper left and lower right corners respectively with said first (X,Y) co-ordinate pair in the upper left hand corner of the display window.

[0010] The method may further comprise the step of resizing the display window to accommodate said rectangular portion.

[0011] Step a)i) may further comprise the step of resizing the display window to permit the display of a certain portion of the page, the display window after resizing having X and Y dimensions WX and WY respectively, points in said WWW page each have an (X,Y) co-ordinate pair, and the at least one locator element comprises a particular (X,Y) co-ordinate pair of a particular point in the page, and said dimensions WX and WY.

[0012] Said step of displaying the subset of the downloaded page may comprise the step of resizing the display window to have said dimensions WX and WY, and displaying the page with said particular point in the upper left hand corner of the display window.

[0013] Said locator element may comprise an item identifier which is searchable within said page, wherein said step of displaying the subset of the downloaded page comprises: searching the downloaded page for said item identifier; displaying the contents of the page starting with said item identifier, or the contents of the page immediately following the item identifier.

[0014] Said locator element may be determined on

the basis of the position of the page within the display window when the create enhanced bookmark option is selected.

[0015] The page may be a world wide web page and the remote access file point may be a universal resource locator.

[0016] According to a second broad aspect, the invention provides a method of providing enhanced bookmarking in the context of accessing a page of user-interactive information content from a remote service provider comprising: a) creating a superbookmark by selecting a plurality of enhanced bookmarks each containing a respective remote access file pointer; b) in the process of using a superbookmark: i) selecting a previously created superbookmark; ii) downloading into memory a page identified in the remote access file pointer of each of the bookmarks identified by the superbookmark; iii) displaying in a display window a respective subset of each of the downloaded pages.

[0017] Each bookmark may also contain a respective locator element wherein in step b)iii), the subset of each of the downloaded pages is identified by the respective locator element.

[0018] The method may further comprise the steps of creating said enhanced bookmarks by executing the steps of for each enhanced bookmark, the steps of: i) accessing a respective page having a respective remote access file pointer; ii) selecting a create enhanced bookmark option; iii) storing the remote access file pointer in a respective bookmark directory record; iv) also storing in the respective bookmark directory record a respective bookmark directory record a respective at least one locator element.

[0019] According to a third broad aspect, the invention provides a method of providing enhanced bookmarking in the context of accessing a page of user-interactive information content from a remote service provider comprising: a) a user selecting a create super-bookmark option; b) creating a superbookmark record; c) creating a plurality of enhanced bookmarks by executing, for each enhanced bookmark, the steps of: i) accessing a respective page having a respective remote access file pointer; iii) storing the remote access file pointer in the superbookmark record; iv) also storing in the superbookmark record a respective at least one locator element; d) in the process of using a superbookmark: i) selecting a previously created superbookmark; ii) downloading into memory the page identified in the remote access file pointer of each of the remote access file pointers identified by the superbookmark; iii) displaying in a display window a respective subset of each of the downloaded pages, the respective subset being determined by said respective at least one locator element.

[0020] According to a fourth broad aspect, the invention provides an enhanced bookmarking system for use in a processing platform connectable to a service provider for providing enhanced bookmarking of pages of user-interactive information content, the processing

platform being connected to a display, the system comprising: a memory for storing enhanced bookmark records, each record containing a remote access file pointer and at least one locator element; a browser for accessing a page having a remote access file pointer and displaying the page on the display, the browser having a create enhanced bookmark option which when selected stores the remote access file pointer of the currently displayed page and at least one locator element in a new bookmark directory record in said memory; the browser having an access bookmark option which provides for the selection of a particular one or said bookmark records in said memory, which upon selection of a particular bookmark downloads into memory the page identified in the file access pointer of the selected bookmark record and displays on said display a subset of the downloaded page, the subset being determined by said at least one locator element.

[0021] According to a fifth broad aspect, the invention provides an enhanced bookmarking system for use in a processing platform connectable to a service provider for providing enhanced bookmarking of pages of user-interactive information content, the processing platform being connected to a display, the system comprising: a memory for storing enhanced bookmark records, each record containing a remote access file pointer and at least one locator element; a browser for accessing a page having a remote access file pointer and displaying the page on the display, the browser having a create enhanced bookmark option which when selected stores the remote access file pointer of the currently displayed page and at least one locator element in a new bookmark directory record in said memory; the browser having an access bookmark option which provides for the selection of a particular one or said bookmark records in said memory, which upon selection of a particular bookmark downloads into memory the page identified in the file access pointer of the selected bookmark record and displays on said display a subset of the downloaded page, the subset being determined by said at least one locator element.

[0022] According to a sixth broad aspect, the invention provides an enhanced bookmark.

[0023] According to a seventh broad aspect, the invention provides a superbookmark.

[0024] The present invention may also reside in a sub-combination of the features described above.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0025] Preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the attached drawings in which:

Figure 1A is a system overview diagram for a system with which user-interactive information content may be viewed by a user;

Figure 1B is a front view of a monitor with a screen

display used to view user-interactive information content;

Figure 2 is a record format of a conventional bookmark;

Figures 3A,3B,3C,3D,3E, and 3F are record formats for enhanced bookmarks according to embodiments of the invention;

Figure 4A is a record format for a super-bookmark according to an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 4B is a view of a screen display produced from a super-bookmark of Figure 4A;

Figures 5A,5B and 5C are example screen displays for another method of creating a super-bookmark; and

Figures 6A and 6B are flowcharts for downloading information pointed to by the bookmarks of Figures 3A,3B,3C,3D,3E, 3F or 4A.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0026] The following description is of a preferred embodiment by way of example only and without limitation to the combination of features necessary for carrying the invention into effect.

[0027] Referring firstly to Figure 1A, a system with which user-interactive information content may be viewed by a user/subscriber comprises, a subscriber's local equipment and software, generally indicated by 1, a communications network of some sort, generally indicated by 2, and a service provider, generally indicated by 3. The subscriber's local equipment and software 1 includes a display 4, a CPU (central processing unit) 5, a memory/OS (operating system) 6, browser software 7, and a modem 8 connected to the communication network 2. The display 4 may be a display screen of a monitor for example, the display contents of which are controlled by the CPU 5. The communication network 2 may consist of any communications infrastructure capable of exchanging data. For example, it may be a PSTN (public switched telephone network), a wireless network, a satellite network, a utility network, or a private LAN (local area network). The service provider 3 is any system capable of providing user-interactive information content to the user's equipment and software 1 through the communications network 2. It might be an Internet service provider, a cable company, a WWW service provider, ADSI/SDN providers, to name a few examples. Through the communications network 2, the browser software 7 forming part of the subscriber's local equipment and software 1 accesses data provided by the service provider 3, and may do so using any existing or future protocol for data exchange.

[0028] User-interactive information content may be divided into one or more pages each having a respective remote access file pointer, this being a URL for the case that the page is a WWW page. A conventional way of browsing a user-interactive information content page will be described with reference to Figure 1B which

shows detailed view a subscriber's monitor 10 having display 4. A window 12 is opened on the display 4 for the purpose of page browsing. The window 12 has a contents display area 14, an X-scroll area 16 running the length of the display area in the X direction and a Y-scroll area 18 running in the length of the display area in the Y direction. The X-scroll area 16 and Y-scroll area 18 have an X-scroll bar 20 and a Y-scroll bar 22 respectively. When a page is being displayed in display area 14, the scroll bars 20,22 indicate what portion of the page is being shown at any instant in time. The X-scroll area 16 is normalized in length to represent the entire length of the page in the X-direction, with the X-scroll bar 20 indicating the portion of that entire length which is actually being displayed. Similarly, the Y-scroll area 18 is normalized in length to represent the entire length of the page in the Y-direction, with the Y-scroll bar 22 indicating the portion of that entire length which is actually being displayed. A user may scroll through the contents of the page horizontally or vertically by using a pointing device to move the scroll bars 20,22 within the scroll areas 16,18. The window 12 and display area 14 need not occupy the entire display 4. Other windows may also be present.

[0029] Every point on the display area 14 may be assigned an (X,Y) display coordinate pair (DX,DY) with the display coordinates of the upper left hand corner of the display area being (0,0), and the display coordinates of the lower right hand corner of the display being (DXmax,DYmax). The maximum coordinates (DXmax,DYmax) will change if the size of the display area 14 is changed due to window resizing. The dimensions of the display coordinates may be pixels for example. In addition, each point in the page being viewed may be assigned an (X,Y) page coordinate pair (PX,PY) with respect to the upper left hand point in the page with the upper left hand corner of the page being given the page coordinates (0,0) and the lower right hand corner of the page being given the page coordinates (PXmax, PYmax).

[0030] Typically, the first time a page is accessed, a user has found it through the process of browsing. Initially, the page is displayed with the upper left hand corner page coordinates (PX,PY) = (0,0) aligned with the upper left hand display coordinates (DX,DY) = (0,0), in a window having a default window size (WX,WY) where WX and WY are the lengths of the window in the X and Y dimensions respectively. The dimensions reflect whatever the window size was when the page's file pointer was selected. The user scrolls down and/or across through the page to a location of interest, at which point the page coordinates (PX,PY) = (PX1,PY1) will be in the upper left hand corner of the display area. The user may then also adjust the window dimensions to be (WX1,WY1) At this juncture, the page coordinate range defined by the diagonal coordinate pairs (PX1,PY1), (PX2, PY2), where (PX2,PY2) = (PX1 + WX1, PY1 + WY1) is displayed in the display area.

[0031] The user then has the option of storing the re-

remote access file pointer of the page in a bookmark directory. The user may do this by selecting a menu item from the screen display for example. Subsequently, the same page may be visited by selecting the appropriate entry from the bookmark directory. To view the particular area of interest, the user must again scroll down to point (X1,Y1), and must resize the window to (WX,WY1).

[0032] Referring now to Figure 2, a conventional WWW bookmark directory has a record for each bookmark. Each record contains a text name for the bookmark which identifies the page to the user, and contains the URL of the page of interest.

[0033] According to an embodiment of the invention, an improved type of bookmark, referred to herein as an enhanced bookmark, and an improved bookmarking system is provided. Figures 3A,3B,3C,3D,3E and 3F show the record format for improved bookmark directories according to preferred aspects of the invention. A bookmark directory would contain a plurality of records of the type shown in these Figures with each record containing an enhanced bookmark.

[0034] In Figure 3A, each record in the bookmark directory includes a text name and a remote access file pointer, and additionally includes a single (PX1,PY1) page coordinate pair. This coordinate pair identifies what point of the page identified by the remote access file pointer should be displayed in the upper left hand corner of the window in which the page is to be displayed, i.e. which page coordinates are to be aligned with display coordinates (0,0). As in the prior art systems, the instigation of the creation of such an enhanced bookmark may involve the selection of an icon or a menu item in the screen display or may involve any other type of option selection mechanism available. The remote access file pointer of the current page would then be stored in association with the enhanced bookmark. In addition, whatever (PX1,PY1) point is currently in the upper left hand corner of the display would be stored in the enhanced bookmark. Alternatively, the user may have the option of identifying the particular (PX1,PY1) point, either with a pointer of some sort, or with cursor controls.

[0035] In Figure 3B, each record in the bookmark directory includes the fields identified with respect to Figure 3A, and also includes a second (PX2,PY2) coordinate pair. The two coordinate pairs (PX1,PY1) and (PX2,PY2) together identify a portion of the page to be displayed, namely a rectangle having (PX1,PY1) as its upper left hand coordinates, and having (PX2,PY2) as its lower right coordinates. As in the prior art systems, the instigation of the creation of such an enhanced bookmark may involve the selection of an icon or a menu item in the screen display. The remote access file pointer of the current page would then be stored in association with the enhanced bookmark. In addition, whatever (PX1,PY1) point is currently in the upper left hand corner of the display would be stored in the enhanced bookmark, and whatever (PX2,PY2) point is currently in the

lower right hand corner would be stored in the enhanced bookmark. Alternatively, the user may have the option of identifying the particular (PX1,PY1) and (PX2,PY2) points, either with a pointer of some sort, or with cursor controls.

[0036] In Figure 3C, each record in the bookmark directory includes the fields identified with respect to Figure 3A, and also includes a (WX,WY) dimension pair which identifies the dimensions of the window in which the page is to be displayed. As in the prior art systems, the instigation of the creation of such an enhanced bookmark may involve the selection of an icon or a menu item in the screen display. The remote access file pointer of the current page would then be stored in association with the enhanced bookmark. In addition, whatever (PX1,PY1) point is currently in the upper left hand corner of the display would be stored in the enhanced bookmark. Alternatively, the user may have the option of identifying the particular (PX1,PY1) point, either with a pointer of some sort, or with cursor controls. Finally, the current dimensions (WX,WY) of the window display would also be stored in the bookmark.

[0037] In Figure 3D, each record in the bookmark directory includes a text field and a remote access file pointer field. In addition, each record contains a scroll bar position pair (SX,SY) which identify the position of the scroll bars when the create enhanced bookmark option was selected.

[0038] In Figure 3E, each record in the bookmark directory includes a text field and a remote access file pointer field. In addition, there is an item identifier field present in each record. This item identifier provides a mechanism for searchably locating a portion of the page identified by the remote access file pointer. For example, it could be a string of text that appears at the beginning of a portion of the display which is to be displayed. It could be a string of text that appears before a portion of the display. As in the prior art systems, the instigation of the creation of such an enhanced bookmark may involve the selection of an icon or a menu item in the screen display. The remote access file pointer of the current page would then be stored in association with the enhanced bookmark. In addition, an item identifier which identifies a portion of the display would be stored in the bookmark. This may be an item identifier which immediately precedes the (PX1,PY1) point currently in the upper left hand corner of the display. Alternatively it may be an item identifier currently in the upper left hand corner of the display. Alternatively, the user may have the option of identifying the particular item identifier, either with a pointer of some sort, or with cursor controls. Preferably the item identifier is a relatively static item in the sense that it does not change over time. If an item identifier is selected which is subject to change, it may not be possible to locate the changed item identifier.

[0039] Particular examples of enhanced bookmark records have been described with reference to Figures 3A - 3E. More generally, a record of the type shown in

Figure 3F may be employed. This record includes a text field, remote access file pointer field, and one or more locator element fields. Each locator element may be any of the previously described parameters such as PX1, PY1, PX2, PY2, WX, WY, SX, SY or item identifiers. Furthermore, it is contemplated that other types of locator elements such as HTML anchors, XML (extended markup language) anchors, or any other types of anchors which may exist now or be developed in the future which are used to display text and graphics in the Internet or other information network, may be employed so long as collectively for each bookmark they make possible the determination of a particular portion of a page to display.

[0040] The above examples are particularly suitable for bookmarking of HTML content of the WWW. In addition, frames, JPEG files, GIF files, Java applets, quick-time movies, or other plug-in elements may be pointed to specifically without needing to download the HTML file in which they were originally downloaded.

[0041] Of course, a bookmark directory which permits the inclusion of any of the above types of bookmarks would be preferable.

[0042] The above discussion has centred upon the creation of various types of enhanced bookmarks. Once such an enhanced bookmark is created, it is accessed using conventional techniques. For example, if the enhanced bookmark is in a directory, then the enhanced bookmark could be selected from the directory in conventional fashion.

[0043] For bookmarks of the type described with reference to Figure 3A, the remote access file pointer would be accessed in conventional fashion, and the complete contents of the page downloaded into memory but not yet displayed. Once the page is downloaded, it is displayed with page coordinate pair (PX1, PY1) in the upper left hand corner of the display area. If a bookmark which is shown in Figure 3E is used then the page is displayed with the scroll bars moved to the positions indicated by SX, SY.

[0044] For bookmarks of the type described with reference to Figure 3B, the remote access file pointer would be accessed in conventional fashion, and the complete contents of the page downloaded into memory but not yet displayed. Once the page is downloaded, the range of the page defined by the diagonal coordinate pairs (PX1, PY1), and (PX2, PY2). Preferably, the window is resized such that the display area accommodates this display range exactly.

[0045] For bookmarks of the type described with reference to Figure 3C, the remote access file pointer would be accessed in conventional fashion, and the complete contents of the page downloaded into memory but not yet displayed. The display window is resized such that it has dimensions (WX, WY). Once the page is downloaded, it is displayed with page coordinate pair (PX1, PY1) in the upper left hand corner of the display area.

[0046] For bookmarks of the type described with reference to Figure 3D, the remote access file pointer would be accessed in conventional fashion, and the complete contents of the page downloaded into memory but not yet displayed. Once the page is downloaded, the contents are searched for the item identifier. Once this is found, the contents of the page following the item identifier are displayed starting in the upper left hand corner of the display area, or the page is displayed with the item identified in the upper left hand corner, depending upon the criteria for its selection.

[0047] In another embodiment of the invention, super-bookmarks are provided which permit the collaging of displays defined by the above identified enhanced bookmarks. Figure 4A is an example of a super-bookmark record which includes a text field identifying the super-bookmark, and a plurality of enhanced bookmarks or pointers to enhanced bookmarks (three shown), each being one of the types described above. In association with each enhanced bookmark there is stored a respective bookmark coordinate pair (BX, BY) which identifies where in the window to display the material identified by the particular enhanced bookmark. The bookmark coordinate pair in effect redefine the display origin from being located at (0,0) to being at the location identified by the bookmark coordinate pair. The instigation of the creation of such a bookmark may involve the selection of an icon or a menu item in the screen display. The user would then be able to select a number of enhanced bookmarks from the existing bookmark directory. Each such enhanced bookmark preferably represents a predetermined area of screen real estate. The system may be configured to arrange the respective pieces of real estate by defining the bookmark coordinates (BX, BY) such that all of the bookmarked displays fit the screen, or alternatively, a display template may be created which allows the user to define the coordinates (BX, BY) by defining where the respective pieces are to appear. An example of a display area which might result from a super-bookmark containing three enhanced bookmarks is shown in Figure 4B. The display area 14 contains three sub-displaying areas 30, 32, 34 each displaying contents pointed to by a first, second and third bookmark respectively, which have the bookmark coordinates (BX1, BY1), (BX2, BY2) and (BX2, BY3) as their upper left hand display coordinates respectively. These points now become the origin for each sub-display. For example, if the first bookmark is of the type illustrated in Figure 3B and this includes first and second page coordinate pairs (PX1, PY1) (PX2, PY2), the page identified by the bookmark's remote access file pointer is displayed with the page coordinate pair (PX1, PY1) aligned with (BX1, BY2), the new origin.

[0048] Alternatively, the system may be configured to spawn a separate window for each enhanced bookmark in the super-bookmark, and arrange the windows in a non-overlapping fashion on the screen display. In this case, each bookmark does not necessarily have to be

an enhanced bookmark assuming that the windows are individually scrollable.

[0049] In the context of the WWW, a super bookmark need not only contain enhanced bookmarks from different websites/servers. It may also contain enhanced bookmarks from the same website or web page. For instance, the first part of a superbookmark may point to a portion of a web page containing a search field/text entry field and send button. A second part of the superbookmark may point to the results page (usually referred to by a cgi) like <http://www.yahoo.com/search.cgi> = <some text to search> using either the post or get method (hidden or viewed sending of text field). This would allow the user a rapid method of initializing new searches without scrolling.

[0050] In the above super-bookmarking option, previously existing enhanced bookmarks or bookmarks are selected to create the superbookmark. Alternatively, the super-bookmark can be created in real time. A user may select a portion of a displayed page for example as shown in Figure 5A and paste this portion into a "new super-bookmark" window such as shown in Figure 5B. By doing this repeatedly, a "new-superbookmark" window such as shown in Figure 5C may be generated. In this example, the superbookmark contains tiles or clipings labelled A,B,C,D,E from five pages (some of which may be the same page), and the superbookmark which is stored contains the enhanced bookmark information needed to identify each tile and also contains bookmark coordinates locating where the tile is to be displayed.

[0051] Preferably, the system would provide the option of moving, adding, deleting tiles, and scrolling within the super-bookmark window. Furthermore, preferably, the user is preferably given the option of scrolling within a tile using a hand tool, such as illustrated in Figure 5D.

[0052] With any of the above described enhanced bookmark types, depending upon the nature of the material being downloaded, and on the particular source of the material being downloaded, it may or may not be possible to download a specific subset of a page. Furthermore, again depending upon the nature of the material being downloaded, it may or may not be possible to deduce the size of items being downloaded without downloading them completely. For example, in the context of the WWW, the (X,Y) coordinates of items on a page move around during the loading of the page, and are not fixed until everything above a particular item has been downloaded. This is because the download of the page does not necessarily happen completely sequentially. Sometimes all of the text will be downloaded first, followed by graphic images and charts which are inserted into the text, and which shift the text around from its initial position. However, the size of an item such as a graphic image is usually determinate at the beginning of its download. For example, in HTML files, graphic images include a width and height parameter which determine the size of the image.

[0053] Different downloading methods will now be described with reference to Figures 6A, 6B and 6C.

[0054] Referring firstly to Figure 5A, a flowchart is shown for a downloading method which assumes that before an (X,Y) position in downloaded information can be determined, everything above that position must have been downloaded. In step one, the user selects an enhanced bookmark from the bookmark directory. In step two, the user's computer connects to the remote access file pointer included in the bookmark. In step three, the browser downloads the entire contents of the page in the usual fashion with the exception of the fact that the contents are not yet displayed in the display, thereby creating a virtual copy of the entire page in memory. In step four, the browser displays the subset of the virtual page which is identified by the enhanced bookmark. At that point, since the entire page is in memory, the user can scroll up and down as usual view the remainder of the page.

[0055] Referring next to Figure 6B, a flowchart is shown for a downloading method which assumes that before an (X,Y) position in downloaded information can be determined, a template of everything above that position must be created. In step one, the user selects an enhanced bookmark from the bookmark directory. In step two, the user's computer connects to the remote access file pointer included in the bookmark. In step three, the browser downloads the contents of the page item by item, but only enough to determine the screen space that the item occupies (for example the above identified width and height of an HTML graphic image). In the case of text, this usually requires the entire text to be downloaded. In the case of graphics, usually at the beginning of the download it is possible to determine the shape and size of the image. Enough items are downloaded until a template which covers the subset of the page identified by the enhanced bookmark has been created. Preferably, a template for the entire page is completed. In HTML, this would simply comprise downloading the entire HTML file not including the graphic images. In step four, the complete versions of everything falling within the subset are downloaded and displayed. At that point, depending upon the particular implementation, the user may or may not be able to scroll up and down as usual to view the remainder of the page. Scrolling of the downloaded template could be performed, and optionally, graphics images outside the subset which should appear on the screen after scrolling could be downloaded and displayed.

[0056] Referring next to Figure 6C, a flowchart is shown for a downloading method which assumes a specific subset of a page of information can be downloaded directly without the need to download anything before or after the specific subset. In step one, the user selects an enhanced bookmark from the bookmark directory. In step two, the user's computer connects to the URL included in the bookmark. In step three, the browser downloads the specific subset of the page of informa-

tion. In step four, the browser displays the specific subset. At that point, since only the specific subset will be in memory, the user will be unable to scroll up and down as usual to view the remainder of the page. Rather, a new specific subset of information must be downloaded to fill the new portion of the window which is displayed.

[0057] Any of the above methods can be applied to the downloading of information identified by a super-bookmark.

[0058] Preferably, the invention resides completely within the subscriber's local equipment/software and has no impact on the communications network or service provider.

[0059] Numerous modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practised otherwise than as specifically described herein.

[0060] In the above described embodiment, it is assumed that a computer with a processor, memory and monitor is used to provide the improved bookmarking system. More generally, any processing platform and display combination may be used. For example, a set-top box and television screen, hand held web browsers, screen-based telephone sets etc.

[0061] A particular scrolling mechanism has been described with reference to Figure 1A. Of course, any type of scrolling mechanism may be employed with embodiments of the invention which permit scrolling. For example, the scroll bars may be functions which can be turned on or off. Furthermore, the option of moving a cursor with a mouse or a key to effect may be provided.

[0062] In summary the present invention provides a system and method for providing improved bookmarking of remotely provided user-interactive information such as WWW page content are provided. When a bookmark of a page is created, in addition to storing a remote file access pointer such as a universal resource locator, a locator element is stored which identifies a particular subset of the page. When the bookmark is subsequently accessed, only the updated particular subset is displayed, thereby eliminating the need for users to repeatedly scroll through material in which they are not interested. A super-bookmarking option is provided which provides for a bookmark which results in the display of a collage of previously created bookmarked material.

Claims

1. An enhanced bookmarking system for use in a processing platform connectable to a service provider for providing enhanced bookmarking of pages of user-interactive information content, the processing platform being connected to a display, the system comprising:

a memory for storing enhanced bookmark records, each record containing a remote access file pointer and at least one locator element;

a browser for accessing a page having a remote access file pointer and displaying the page on the display, the browser having a create enhanced bookmark option which when selected stores the remote access file pointer of the currently displayed page and at least one locator element in a new bookmark directory record in said memory;

the browser having an access bookmark option which provides for the selection of a particular one or said bookmark records in said memory, which upon selection of a particular bookmark downloads into memory the page identified in the file access pointer of the selected bookmark record and displays on said display a subset of the downloaded page, the subset being determined by said at least one locator element.

2. A system according to claim 1 wherein points in said page each have an (X,Y) coordinate pair, and the at least one locator element comprises a particular (X,Y) coordinate pair of a particular point in the page.

3. A system according to claim 1 wherein points in said page each have an (X,Y) coordinate pair, and the at least one locator element comprises a first (X,Y) coordinate pair of a first point in the page, and a second (X,Y) coordinate pair of a second point in the page.

4. A system according to any one of claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein said locator element comprises an item identifier which is searchable within said page, said system further comprising:

a searching mechanism the downloaded page for said item identifier;
wherein the contents of the page starting with said item identifier or the contents of the page immediately following the item identifier are displayed.

5. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the page is a world wide web page and the remote access file pointer is a universal resource locator.

6. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein a display window is resized to accommodate said subset.

7. A super-bookmarking system for use in a processing platform connectable to a service provider for

providing enhanced bookmarking of pages of user-interactive information content, the processing platform being connected to a display, the system comprising:

a memory for storing a super-bookmark record, a selecting mechanism for selecting a plurality of user-interactive information content pages, each page having a remote access file pointer; the processing platform storing the remote access file pointers in said super-bookmark record

a browser having an access super-bookmark option which provides for the selection of a super-bookmark record in said memory, which upon selection downloads into memory the pages identified in the file access pointers of the selected superbookmark record and displays on said display each downloaded page.

8. A system according to claim 7 wherein:

said selecting mechanism further comprises means for selecting a portion of each selected page, and each portion having at least one locator element; wherein said processing means stores the locator elements in conjunction with the respective file access pointers; and wherein said browsing means only displays a subset of each downloaded page, the subset being determined by the respective locator element(s).

9. A system according to claim 7 wherein said selecting mechanism comprises means for selecting previously created enhanced bookmarks, each enhanced bookmark containing a remote file access pointer and at least one locator element.

10. A system according to claim 7 wherein super-bookmark also contains bookmark coordinates which identify a location in the composite display where the respective subsets are to be displayed, wherein said browser displays each subset at the identified location.

11. A method of providing enhanced user-interactive information content bookmarking in the context of page access from a remote service provider, comprising the steps of:

a) in the process of creating a bookmark:

i) accessing a page having a remote access file pointer;
ii) selecting a create enhanced bookmark option;

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iii) storing the remote access file pointer in a bookmark directory record;
iv) also storing in the bookmark directory record at least one locator element;

b) in the process of using a bookmark:

i) selecting a previously created enhanced bookmark record;
ii) downloading into memory the page identified in the remote access file pointer of the selected bookmark;
iii) displaying in a display window a subset of the downloaded page, the subset being determined by said at least one locator element.

12. A method of providing enhanced bookmarking in the context of accessing a page of user-interactive information content from a remote service provider comprising:

a) creating a superbookmark by selecting a plurality of enhanced bookmarks each containing a respective remote access file pointer;
b) in the process of using a superbookmark:

i) selecting a previously created super-bookmark;
ii) downloading into memory a page identified in the remote access file pointer of each of the bookmarks identified by the superbookmark;
iii) displaying in a display window a respective subset of each of the downloaded pages.

13. A method of providing enhanced bookmarking in the context of accessing a page of user-interactive information content from a remote service provider comprising:

a) a user selecting a create super-bookmark option;
b) creating a superbookmark record;
c) creating a plurality of enhanced bookmarks, by executing, for each enhanced bookmark, the steps of:

i) accessing a respective page having a respective remote access file pointer;
ii) storing the remote access file pointer in the superbookmark record;
iii) also storing in the superbookmark record a respective at least one locator element;

d) in the process of using a superbookmark:

- i) selecting a previously created super-bookmark;
- ii) downloading into memory the page identified in the remote access file pointer of each of the remote access file pointers identified by the superbookmark; 5
- iii) displaying in a display window a respective subset of each of the downloaded pages, the respective subset being determined by said respective at least one locator element. 10

14. An enhanced bookmark.

15. A superbookmark. 15

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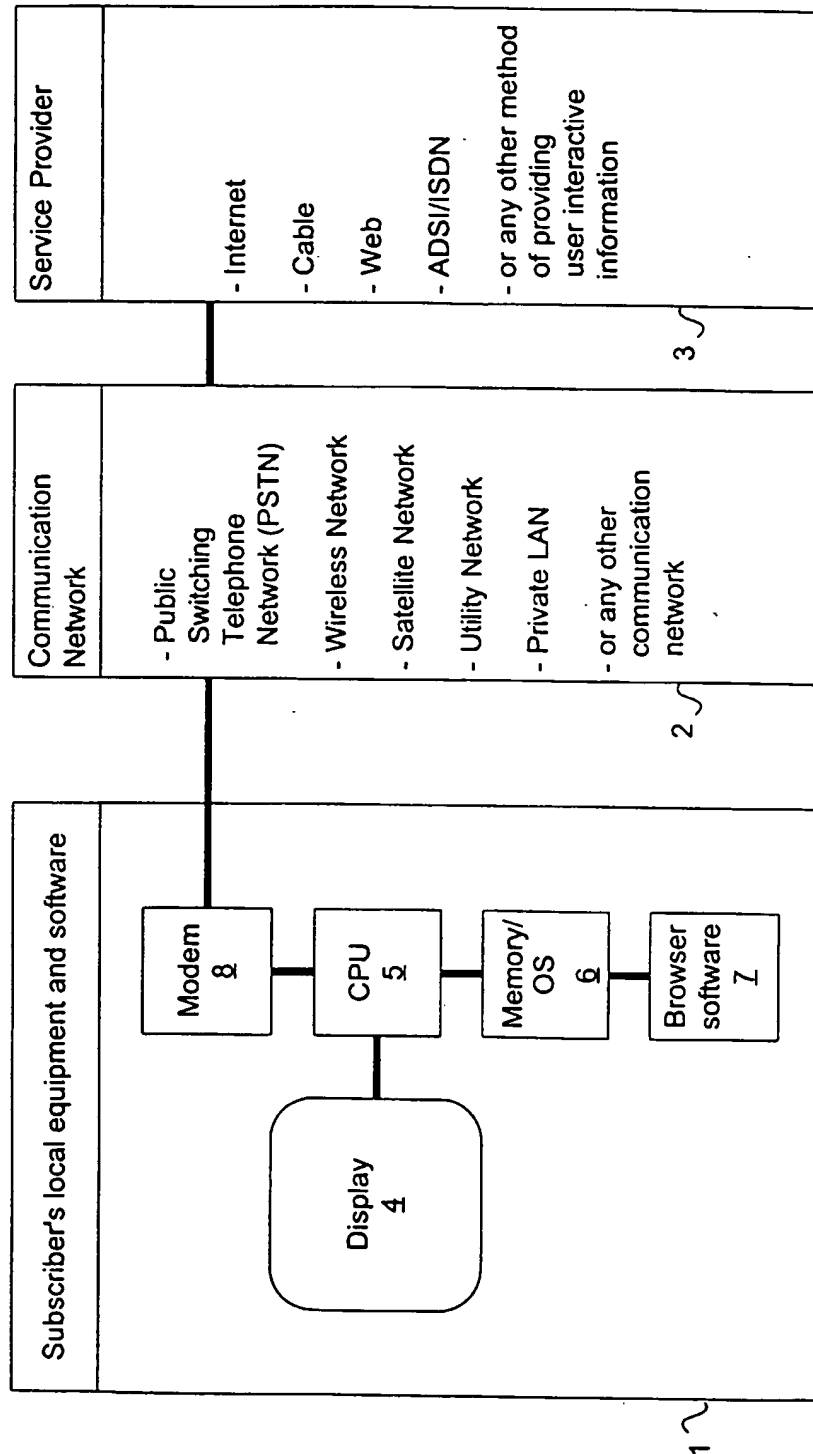


Fig. 1A

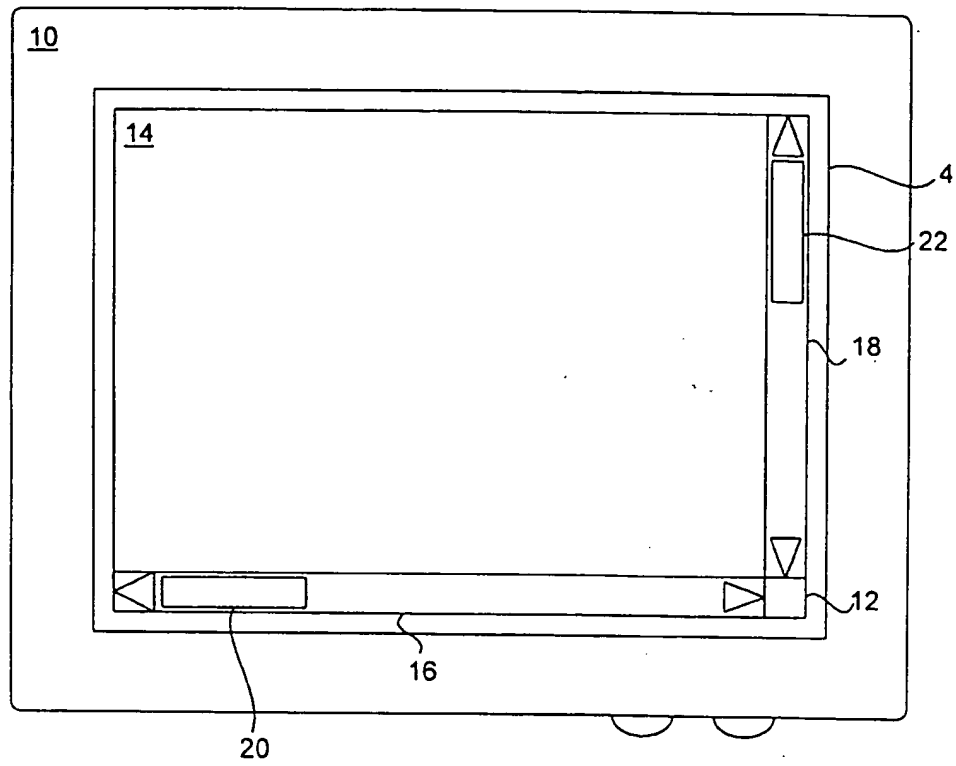


Fig. 1B

Text	URL
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Fig. 2

Text	URL	PX1, PY1
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Fig. 3A

Text	URL	PX1, PY1	PX2, PY2
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Fig. 3B

Text	URL	PX1, PY1	WX, WY
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Fig. 3C

Text	URL	SX	SY
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Fig. 3D

Text	URL	Item Identifier
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Fig. 3E

Text	URL	Locator Element
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Fig. 3F

Text	Bookmark 1	Bookmark2	Bookmark3
	BX1, BY1	BX2, BY2	BX3, BY3

Fig. 4A

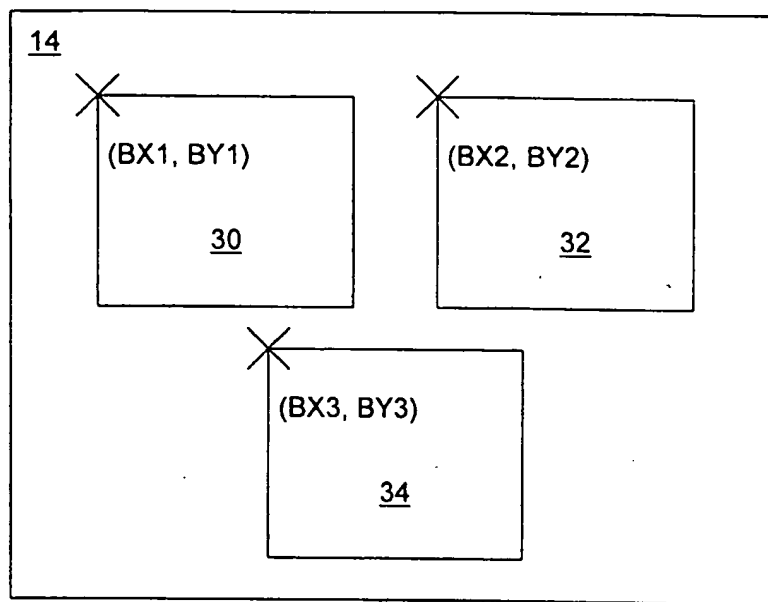


Fig. 4B

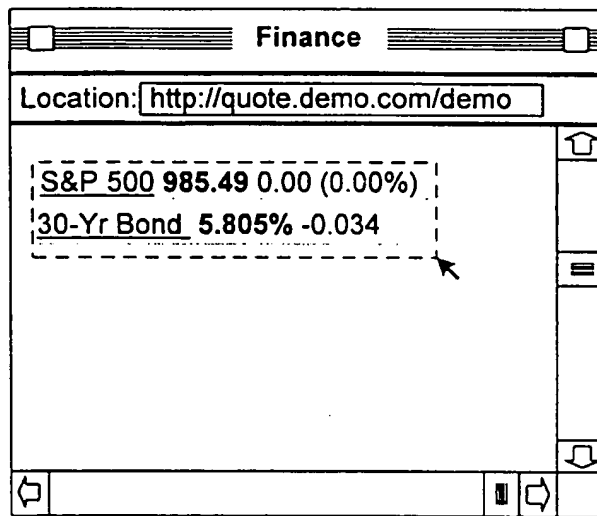


Fig. 5A

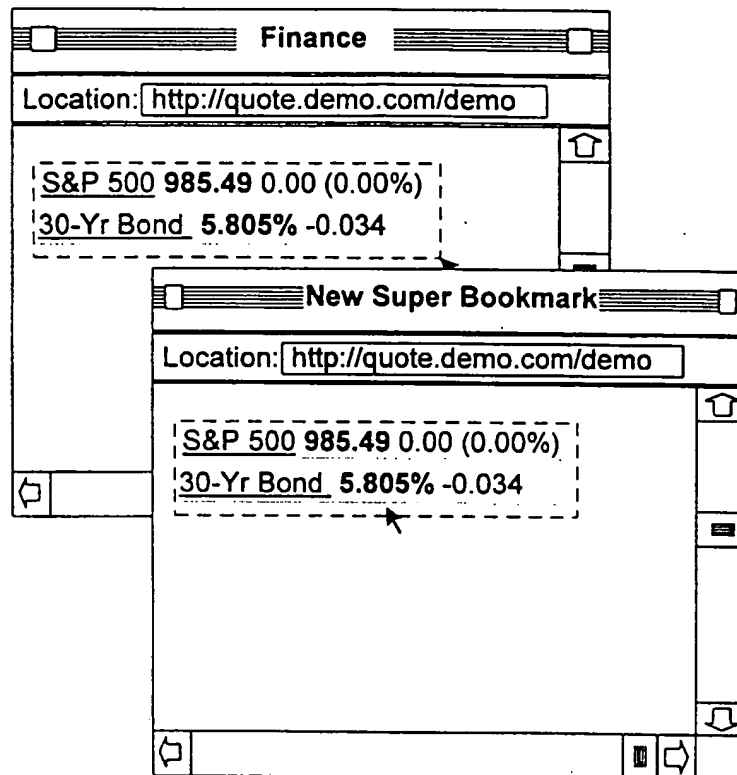


Fig. 5B

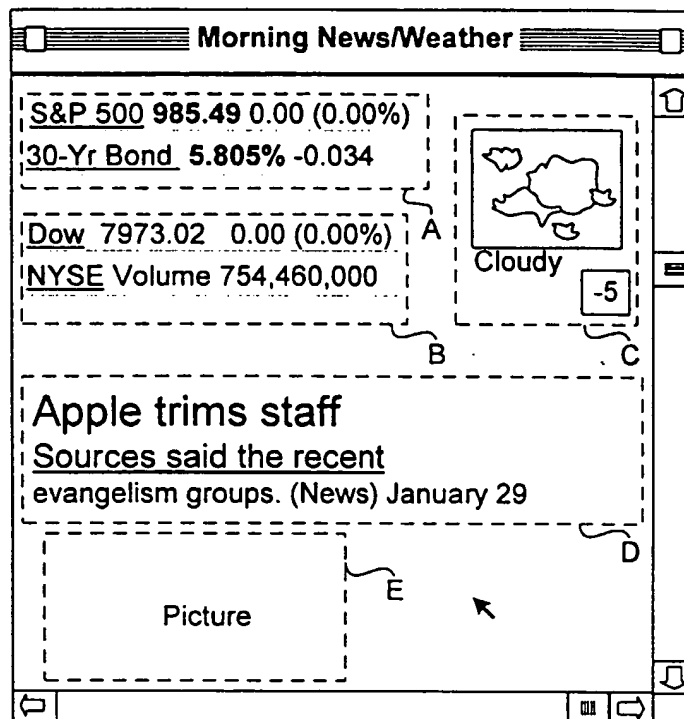


Fig. 5C

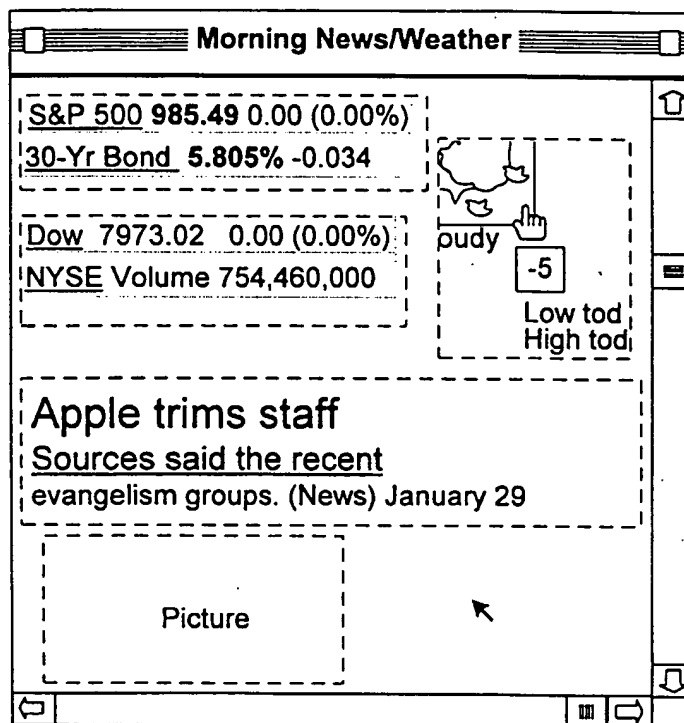


Fig. 5D

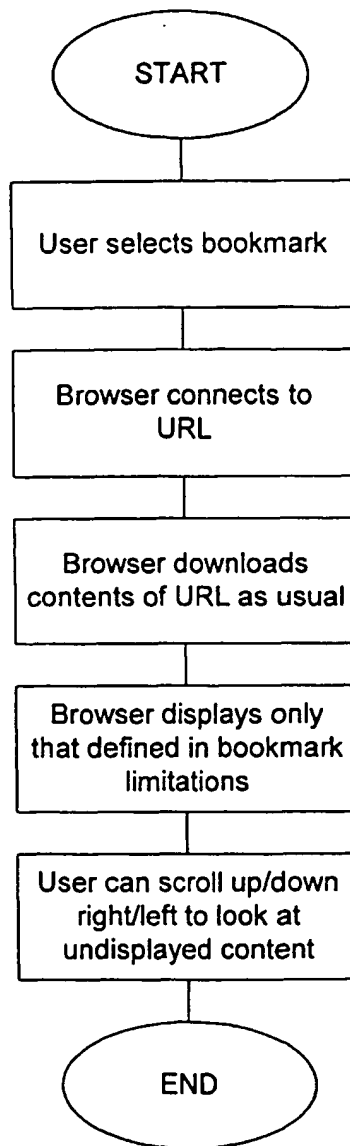


Fig. 6A

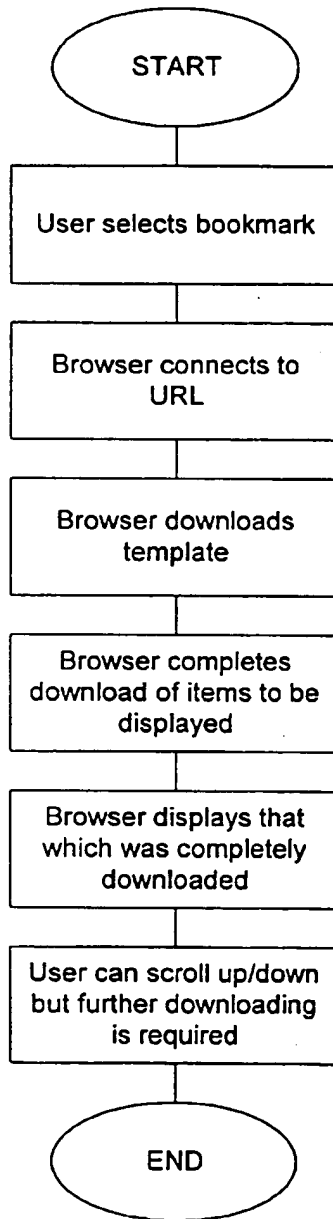


Fig. 6B

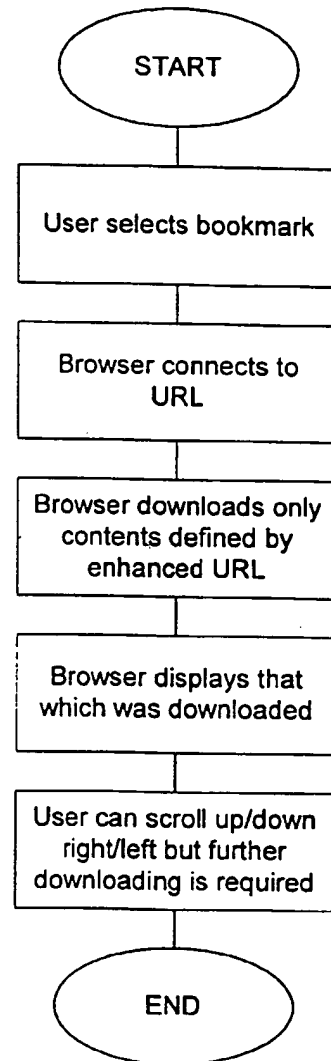


Fig. 6C